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Did Eminem Have The Best Year Of His Career?

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Two weeks ago, MTV News crowned Kanye West as the 2010 Man of the Year. However, a lot of extremely vocal fans thought that the individual picked for the number two position -- rapper Eminem -- should have been in first place by miles. There is an excellent case to be made for Slim Shady, as he had a tremendously successful year that saw him drop one of his most critically-acclaimed and commercially successful albums of his career (*Recovery* is on track to be the best-selling album of 2010), top the charts twice with two killer singles ("Not Afriad" and the Rihanna-assisted "Love the Way You Lie"), co-headline the biggest concerts of the year (the extremely well-received Home and Home shows with Jay-Z) and re-ignite the debate over whether or not he is the greatest rapper of all time (an argument that will continue *ad infinitum*).

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With all of those accomplishments (and with the narrative to go along with it), is it possible that Eminem not only had a great year but perhaps his single best year in his career? Let's take a look back at the major accomplishments year-by-year for proof.

Pre-1999

In the era before signing to Dr. Dre's Aftermath label, Eminem hit peaks when winning rap competitions (including the 1997 Rap Olympics), attracting label offers and releasing music himself (including *Infinite* and *The Slim Shady EP*). But he also had trouble in his personal life that included a suicide attempt. Eventually, he signed a major label deal in 1998.

1999

1999 saw the release of his major-label debut *The Slim Shady LP*, which moved three million copies in that calendar year alone. Both "My Name Is" and "Guilty Conscience" became radio hits and MTV staples. Em also made key contributions to Dr. Dre's smash album *2001*, including "What's the Difference" and "Forgot About Dre."

2000

The Marshall Mathers LP dropped, moving 1.76 million copies in a week and breaking Snoop Dogg's record for the biggest opening week in the history of hip-hop. "The Real Slim Shady," "Stan" and "The Way I Am" all became huge hits (with "The Real Slim Shady" representing his highest chart position yet). Some of his biggest feuds erupted, including his tiff with Christina Aguilera. Em also appeared on tracks with Redman, Method Man, Xzibit and Sticky Fingaz.

2001

In a mad flurry of activity, Eminem toured as a part of both the Up in Smoke Tour (alongside Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre) and the Family Values Tour (which he co-headlined with Limp Bizkit). He also oversaw the release of D12's *Devil's Night*, hooked up with Jay-Z for "Renegade" on Jigga's *The Blueprint* album and performed "Stan" on stage with Elton John in a classic television moment.

2002

The Eminem Show dropped over the summer, bringing with it the hit singles "Without Me" and "Cleaning Out My Closet." Eminem also starred in the semi-autobiographical film "8 Mile," which not only featured Slim Shady's excellent acting but also the smash hit "Lose Yourself," which was his first chart-topping hit.

2003

Eminem took home an Oscar for "Lose Yourself," then focused on the remaining singles from *The Eminem Show* (including "Business" and "Sing for the Moment").

2004

Em released *Encore*, his fourth album, with also topped the *Billboard* album chart. He scored another big single with "Just Lose It" and put out his first real protest anthem in "Mosh." He also got into a beef with Michael Jackson over the "Just Lose It" video (which referenced both Jackson's child molestation trial and an incident that saw Jackson's hair catch fire during a commercial shoot in 1984). The second D12 album *D12 World* also dropped in 2004.

2005

Though he continued to service the singles from *Encore* (including "Like Toy Soldiers" and "Ass Like That"), rumors swirled that Eminem was retiring from music altogether. Those rumors picked up steam with the release of the career-spanning *Curtain Call: The Hits* later in 2005. However, his collaboration efforts continued with tag-teams with 50 Cent, the Game, Trick-Trick, Fat Joe and Obie Trice.

2006

Despite a guest appearance on Akon's "Smack That" and the late release of the compilation *Eminem Presents: The ReUp*, it was pretty quiet for Slim Shady.

2007

Outside of two high-profile guest spots ("Touchdown" with T.I. and "Peep Show" with 50 Cent), Eminem laid low.

2008

Another quiet year, highlighted only by his vocal and production work with Trick-Trick.

2009

Eminem emerged from hibernation with *Relapse*, his first brand-new album in five years. It immediately scored some big hits, including "Crack a Bottle," "3 A.M." and "We Made You." *Relapse: The Refill* followed later in 2009, as did his contribution to Drake's "Forever," largely considered to be the best collaboration of that year.

Which year do you think was Eminem's best? Let us know in the comments!